KATSUICHI KAWAMOTO

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Katsuichi Kawamoto

(1881 -)

Mr. Kawamoto came to Hawaii from Japan in 1899, the youngest of eight contract laborers who were assigned to a work force that was to start a sugar plantation on Molokai. The project failed after seven months and the laborers were released from their three-year contract with the Morioka Immigration Contracting Company.

After working at several odd jobs, Mr. Kawamoto was employed as a foreman by the Nippu Jiji (now the Hawaii Times), a Japanese newspaper in Honolulu. He later became manager of the company, a position he held until his retirement.

In 1909, when he was foreman, the Nippu Jiji became involved in the first Japanese labor strike, defending the plantation laborers in their demand for higher wages. The newspaper again defended the laborers in their 1920 wage strike.

In this interview, Mr. Kawamoto gives his version of the events of those strikes and tells about his early years in Hawaii at the turn of the century. He has received awards for promoting friendship between the United States and Japan and for his work in the Japanese community.

Katherine B. Allen, Interviewer

INTERVIEW WITH KATSUICHI KAWAMOTO

In his Kaimuki home, 943 Eleventh Avenue, Honolulu, 96816

July 5, 1971

K: Katsuichi Kawamoto

T: Translator, Mrs. Takuzo Kawamoto

A: Kathy Allen, Interviewer

Information obtained prior to recording:

Katsuichi Kawamoto was born to Tozaemon and Taka Kawamoto, rice farmers, on September 2, 1881 in Yamaguchi Prefecture on the island of Honshu, in the city of Iwakuni and the village of Tszu. His birthplace is about thirty miles from Hiroshima. In Japan, his name would be Kawamoto Katsuichi.

A: How many were there in his own family? How many children were there?

T: Four sisters and he was the only son.

A: And what were the sisters' names, first names?

T: The oldest was Hide.

A: Are your sisters all deceased now?

K: Yeh.

T: Ah no. I think the youngest is living. Two oldest and the one just below him died.

A: All right. And the youngest is still living and her name is . . .

T: Kono. K-O-N-O. She's the only one now.

A: Where does she live now?

T: She lives in Iwakuni.

A: Still in the hometown.

T: Different village, though. He's the middle [child]. He had two older sisters and two below him.

K: Just only one boy, you know.

A: And he worked on the rice farm with his parents and his sisters. All of them worked on the rice farm.

T: Well, they all had to help, you know, with the family. He says he went to school. Finished the eighth grade. And then, until he came to Hawaii, he helped on the farm.

A: I see. Is there anything about your schooling that you remember especially? What kind of schooling it was or anything about the school?

T: Why, he said his father--well, he was a farmer but on the side he contracted with railroad work. They laid a line, I guess from Yamaguchi to Kobe, and then they contracted for a piece of railroad work. But the company went bankrupt. Oh, so they lost their farm the last year. Oh, that's why he decided to come to Hawaii.

A: That's why he decided. He decided on his own, then, to come to Hawaii.

T: He was sixteen then. He said, after he finished the eighth grade and while he was doing his railroad work with his father, he went to night school at the principal's home after working for two or three years.

A: Very good. And then, what I'm really curious about now is how he heard about Hawaii and decided to come here.

K: (in part) Farm all gone. You know, father lose for that. And then, one time I'm going to the temple, you know. And then coming down Imazu--you know, one of that city--here contraction for coming to Hawaii immigration.

T: When he went to this temple, he heard about this . . .

K: Hawaii immigration.

T: This temple was in Imazu. Then he heard about this contract to go to Hawaii. They were contracting for immigration, so he decided to come. But he was then only sixteen so he couldn't come [even though he passed the required physical examination and would otherwise have been eligible]. So the following year, when he became seventeen,

then he got his notice saying that there were eight people coming to Hawaii and he was one of them.

A: They wouldn't take them at sixteen then.

T: But the following year when he was seventeen, he left with seven others and he was the youngest in that group.

A: Oh really? Youngest in the group that came over. What ship did you come over on, do you remember?

K: America Maru. Japanese boat, you know.

T: Japanese boats are all Maru.

A: Oh yeah, that Maru, I've seen that a lot. (referring now to my note-taking) It's all recorded but I try to keep track of it so I know what's on there, when it's on there.

K: And arrive over here April 20, 1899.

A: Isn't it amazing to be able to remember exact dates like that? 1899. What did you think about when you first saw Hawaii? How did you feel when you first saw the Island of Hawaii when you came on the boat?

K: (in part) . . . Immigration . . . pestilence . . . about ten days, twelve day all time.

T: Quarantine.

A: Quarantine?

T: [They were in] quarantine for about ten days. Honolulu was--didn't they have that big ah . . .

A: Cholera? Was it cholera that time?

K: (in part) All burning, you know . . . Japanese, Chinese town. All burn up.

T: Wasn't it the bubonic plague?

A: Oh, maybe, bubonic plague. In Chinatown. [According to historian Gavan Daws, fires to rid downtown Honolulu of the plague were started on December 31, 1899 in a systematic manner; but a fire that was started on January 20, 1900 got out of control and destroyed thirty-eight acres.] Where were they quarantined then?

T: In immigration.

A: In the immigration station.

K: (in part) Immigration, da kine, Morioka Company.

A: (after listening to K speak in Japanese) Took them fifteen days from Japan to get here.

K: Yeh. About twelve day.

T: About two weeks, I guess.

A: Two weeks, yes. Twelve days getting here, then ten days in quarantine. That was quite a long period, almost a month, of being confined. How did--ah--what kind of conditions were there in this immigration station where you had to stay?

K: (in part) Immigration . . . examination . . . so that everything okay.

T: While they were confined there, they had a sort of physical check-up.

K: (in part) . . . Contraction . . . Molokai.

T: They were sent to Molokai because that's where their contract was.

A: So then, you had to get on a boat again. Inter-island boat.

K: And then Molokai is, you know . . . Maui . . . sugar plantation.

T: They were going to start a sugar plantation on Molokai but . . .

K: And then, no more house, you know . . . Kaunakakai . . . beach.

T: They didn't have any houses so. . . . They arrived there in the dark, so they didn't know where they were sleeping and when they got up in the morning . . .

K: Three hundred and fifty.

A: How many? Three hundred and fifty people? And they were going to start a sugar plantation. But did they?

T: Well, they didn't have any housing so that night they slept on the beach. When they got up in the morning, they

found that they were sleeping on the cow dung. They landed at Kaunakakai but their destination was Palaau. Is there a place called Palaau over there?

A: Yes. Palaau. P-A-L-A-A . . .

T: Pala'au. That's where their destination was.

A: And so then they <u>did</u> start the sugar plantation there?

T: Yes.

K: And then, you know that Molokai no more water, you know, so Kaunakakai pumping water.

T: Well, they had to irrigate the land because Molokai doesn't have much water. And they were sent there to dig the ditches for the irrigation project.

K: (in part) Pick and shovel hard . . . Tora, old man got . . . Molokai big plantation now . . . plantation store no got . . . English, Japanese talk . . . big man, you know.

T: Oh, well, there's this old man from Tokyo. His name was Tora. He was cook for the supervisor. So, you know digging ditches is hard work and he wanted to learn how to cook, so he assisted. After he was through with his digging, then he went to help because he wanted to learn how to cook.

K: . . . Everybody three year contraction come in from here to here, you know . . . salt water . . .

T: Well, they were supposed to serve for three years but, you know, they were pumping the water and they hit salt water, so the whole project wasn't any good anymore, so their contracts were cancelled. So they were free to go on their own.

A: Oh, I see. Before the three years was up, then.

T: Yes. In fact, at the end of that same year. So actually they served until . . .

A: End of 1899.

T: They only served about seven months.

K: (in part) . . . Only twenty . . . hospital Molokai . . .

T: He contracted beriberi so he had to remain in the hospital

on Molokai.

A: How long a treatment--how long did he have to remain there?

K: About two months.

A: Kaunakakai, I guess.

K: No. Molokai no. Plantation hospital. Only twenty men, you know. Other men all go.

A: Only twenty men and all of you in the hospital?

T: Twenty men were in the hospital. The others left.

K: (in part) . . . Arrive here Honolulu . . . going up Nuuanu, Kukui [streets] . . . Chinese town, Japanese town . . . no more house . . . Central High School . . . next morning . . . twenty-dollar house . . . too much . . . Kawasaki Hotel.

T: Well, you know, they were released from the Molokai hospital and they were told that they could go in the hospital in Honolulu but that wasn't so, you know. They just wanted them to get out of Molokai sooner. And when they arrived here, the Chinatown was all burned. You know, they burned it deliberately because of the plague. And they wanted to go to Kawasaki Hotel near that area, in the Vineyard area, but the bridge was down so they had to cross the river on the stepping stones to get to that place. And the next morning--they stayed at the hotel that night--the next morning they went to Morioka Immigration Contracting Company--they were under contract to them--and they were told that they were going to be sent back to Japan because they were ill. That's why they were sent out to Honolulu, because they were ill.

A: Because they were ill and they sent them from the hospital on Molokai.

T: They were told that they were going to be sent to the hospital here, but that was just a trick. Actually, they were going to be sent back to Japan. But most of them were well by that time so, instead of sending them back to Japan, they had a deposit of twenty dollars each in the immigration bank, so they were given that money and told that they were free.

A: Now is that how much they had earned?

T: No, that was the deposit. Two dollars and fifty cents a

month they deposited.

A: From their earnings. Gosh, imagine how long it would take to save twenty dollars even. [Eight months.]

T: He said this friend that he met in Molokai, Mr. Fukushima, offered him a job with a newspaper company. He was a salesman for a store in Molokai.

A: Ah, let me try to understand this now. He met this Mr. Fukushima in Molokai. Was it before he left Molokai, then, that Fukushima offered him the job?

T: No, no. After he came here.

A: After he came to Honolulu?

T: Yes.

A: But did Fukushima write to him or how did he know about it?

T: No, I guess he was working here by that time. He left Molokai.

A: Oh, he had left Molokai also and come here. So he offered him a job with a newspaper.

T: Hawaii Shimpo. It's located on School Street.

A: What kind of a job was it he offered?

T: Delivery boy, all-around man, running errands. But they didn't have those big presses then. They just had to run [the press] by hand.

K: (in part) . . . Cook . . . Kuhio, no? Prince Kuhio.

T: Well, after he worked at the Hawaii Shimpo--he stayed about six months with this newspaper but he thought, no progress, so he got a job as a cook with the aunt of Prince Kuhio. They were living up Nuuanu [Valley].

A: What was the name?

T: But he stayed there only three days because his. . . . This man, he was working as a foreman at--Mr. Kawashima was his name--Yamato Shimbun. Yamato means big. [Translator's note: Yamato is actually another name for Japan.] He was foreman there. Newspaper. Later it became the Hawaii Times. It later was changed to Nippu Jiji and

Nippu Jiji became Hawaii Times.

A: All right. Now, he stayed only three days there.

T: Yes. Then he was offered a job. Mr. Kawashima asked him to come to his newspaper company because he had to go to Hilo. You know, you remember the Machida Drug Store in Hilo?

A: Yes, I do.

T: Well, he was related to the Machidas--Mr. Kawashima was--so he was asked to come there to be the manager. So he wanted somebody to take his place with the newspaper company. So he asked my father-in-law to take his place but he told Mr. Kawashima that, you know, he was untrained and he didn't know anything about being a foreman. Mr. Kawashima told him that he'll train him for three months. At that time, the newspaper company was located on Kukui Street but they wanted to expand because the place was too small so they moved to Pauahi and Smith Street.

A: And moved to where?

T: Later on they moved to Nuuanu and Pauahi.

A: Did they change the name also then?

T: It was still Yamato Shimbun. You want the Japanese name?

A: Yes. Yamato Shimbun.

T: Shimbun. That's newspaper. Shimbun means newspaper. S-H-I-M-B-U-N.

A: Well, that would be the name on the newspaper so I'd want that one.

K: (in part) . . . One day go one $0.50, fifteen dollars a month.

A: Fifteen dollars a month when he was working as a foreman?

T: No, no, that was when he was [on Molokai] that he was receiving that much. Now he's gone back to . . .

A: Not $2.50 a month as we thought?

T: No. That's the amount they were saving on deposit [in the immigration bank].

A: That fifty cents a day, when you break it right down to how much you earn each day, seems like so little.

T: In 1905. . . . You've heard of Mr. Soga?

A: Mr. Soga?

K: Yasutaro Soga.

A: What is it?

T: Yasutaro Soga. He was the president-editor of Hawaii Times for a long time. But he first was offered a job at Yamato Shimbun in 1905 when they were incorporated into a corporation. He was invited to come to this newspaper. He was with the other newspaper but he was invited to head this newspaper as editor-president.

A: Oh, I see, I see. He [Mr. Soga] was with this other one then for quite some time--the Hawaii Shimpo--and [Mr. Kawamoto] was there for six months and then he went . . .

T: Then he went as a cook for three days and then he was offered a job at Yamato Shimbun.

A: And that was in 1905?

T: No. 1902.

A: 1902 not '05. He goes from the immigration company, and that was at the end of 1899, so now we're in 1900 when he goes to Hawaii Shimpo and he stays there six months and then he went to be a cook. (to K) Do you remember what was happening in Hawaiian history at that time? At the time that you went there [to the Yamato Shimbun job]?

T: [It was] 1900. And 1905, Mr. Soga was invited to head the Yamato Shimbun. But at that time, it became a corporation and they changed the name to Nippu Jiji.

A: Okay. Then now, what was your . . . ?

T: He was made manager.

A: Mr. Kawamoto became business manager.

T: Yeh, and then you have to write that Mr. Yasutaro Soga came to head the newspaper as president and editor of Yamato Shimbun which, at that time [1905], was incorporated and the name changed to Nippu Jiji. [Later, during WW II, it was changed to Hawaii Times.]

A: All right. I think I'm clear on that now. Mr. Kawamoto was the business manager at this time [1905]. He had been a foreman, then he became business manager. Was he married by this time?

T: He forgot when he was married.

A: I just wonder if he has any impressions about--well, if he happened to serve Prince Kuhio during the three days he was there [as cook] at his aunt's. Or what kind of food he prepared for them. Just out of interest, what kind of things were they eating in those days? Did Prince Kuhio come to visit his aunt during the short time he was there? (Mr. Kawamoto has brought out a paper from another room) What kind of document is that?

T: Family record. In Japan, every time a baby's born, it's recorded on there; any marriage is recorded; any death is recorded.

A: It's really a family tree and vital statistics then.

T: Every family has one.

A: Is it issued to them?

T: Yes, by their village.

A: Have you ever gone to Japan?

T: Once.

A: To this village? What did you think of it?

T: Well, it was during the summer that I went, you know, and awfully hot. I just wasn't used to that kind of environment.

A: Did you see where he had been before?

T: Yes. Uh huh. The house is still remaining. But my family doesn't live there.

A: Oh, that's right.

T: See, the nephew is taking care of the property.

A: Oh? Well, I thought that they lost the property.

T: Well, most of it they lost. Since he wasn't there to till the land, they had to sell it. But there really was a

very small property to live on. That's why they adopted the nephew, so he could cultivate the land. You could only just keep the land that you could cultivate yourself. That's why they had bankrupt afterwards, you know.

A: I see.

T: Actually he's working for a railroad company but he does the farming off hours just to keep the property.

A: This seems to run in the family then, doesn't it, working for the railroad as well as keeping up a farm? (Mr. Kawamoto begins speaking in Japanese about his marriage) Was this a picture bride?

T: No, I think he met her here. No, she wasn't a picture bride. She was already living here.

A: She was living here? What was her name?

T: Muranaka.

A: Muranaka. First name?

T: Matsu.

A: Matsu Muranaka.

T: She was living here with her sister and brother-in-law because they called her over from Japan. They were married here in. . . . He has it recorded in the Japanese year, Era of Meiji, thirty-seven years, so it's hard to tell.

A: That's according to moon time, then.

T: No, no, Japanese history. Meiji--after Meiji's era--thirty-seven years. 1904. He was married June 1, 1904. That's when they got married.

A: June 1, 1904. And he was working at the newspaper then.

T: Yes.

A: And he had met her, apparently, through this ah . . .

T: They met through mutual friends.

A: Can he remember what his impressions of the general life in the islands was then? In those early days when he first came. Oh, don't forget to ask about Prince Kuhio.

T: The family was just the old lady, the auntie, and her daughter living there, so he went there to. . . . He didn't know much about cooking. He was going to learn cooking from them. He was there for only three days anyway and before that, well, he assisted.

A: They were going to teach him the dishes that they wanted.

T: Yeh. More likely he was just assisting the people in the kitchen. He forgot already the name of the auntie.

A: Uh huh. He doesn't remember. Did Prince Kuhio ever come to the house when you were there as cook?

T: Oh. I don't think she was even his auntie. Was just related.

A: Oh, a relative of Prince Kuhio. I guess in those days everybody probably was related.
Well, let's go on then now. Now I'd better get the names of his children. Matsu Muranaka is his wife and the first child's name then.

T: Altogether they had five children but the two older ones died. You want their names?

A: May I just have their names.

T: The oldest one was Masaru. He died at seventeen.

A: Of anything in particular?

END OF SIDE 2/1ST TAPE

BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

T: (not on tape but recorded in notes) Masaru died at seventeen when he contracted pneumonia after a bike accident in Japan.

A: And the other brother, what was his name?

T: Shoji. He died first. And they were both in Japan.

A: Both in Japan?

T: Yeh. The mother took them to Japan to stay with their grandparents. His wife took the two children to Japan to stay with his father and mother.

A: Is that a custom usually or just she wanted to. . . ?

T: I don't know. Well, they took the children to Japan [because] they wanted to work, you know, he and his wife. They wanted to save as much as they can.

A: I see. They took the children there to live with grandparents, then they came back here to work. In other words, the grandparents were baby sitters way over there. Shoji died also at . . .

T: When he was three years.

A: Okay. Then the next child.

T: The next, my husband, Takuzo. He was born here. And then . . .

A: Were these others born in Japan?

T: No, here. After they came back. Then Kikue. Then Toshio.

A: And these are all living . . .

T: Here. All married.

A: All married. All living here. Is that woman, who has the car parked in back there, is she your sister-in-law?

T: My sister.

A: All right. Now, having done this--the children being in Japan--were they just these two that went to Japan?

T: Uh huh. And then his wife died. She passed away in 1927. March 26, 1927.

A: What kind of work did she do, then, before she died?

T: She was working as a maid. Housework.

K: Housekeeper. Pali Highway.

A: Pali Highway?

T: No, that's family work. That's what she did. [She was the housekeeper for a family living on Pali Highway.]

A: Oh. I thought he said Pali Highway. Now, am I correct on this: she died in March 1926 or 1927?

T: March 26, 1927.

A: Oh. All right. Now, when did he. . . ? I understand that he became the president-editor.

T: No, he never was. He was always business manager.

A: But now your husband is business manager.

T: No, he's the treasurer.

K: My work was the newspaper work, you know. This is all only my family, you know, talk. (after speaking for a long time in Japanese with his daughter-in-law) You know, two newspaper. Buy up to the sugar plantation. Fight. Then the strike.

A: The two, Hawaii Shimpo and Yamato Shimbun . . .

T: No. (Mr. Kawamoto tells the story in Japanese)

A: Oh, strike--a plantation strike. This is what they were striking about. They wanted a raise [from fifty cents to a dollar a day].

T: Yeh. Well, Mr. Negoro, he's the University of California graduate. You know, at that time they didn't have too many university graduates. This Mr. [Motoyuki] Negoro sent a letter to Nippu Jiji asking for, instead of fifty cents a day for the laborers, they wanted a standard of living raise.

K: Thatsa big news, no?

T: And this other newspaper--there were two other newspapers, Japanese newspapers, at that time and Mr. [Sometaro] Sheba . . . . If they raised it to one dollar a day, that means it's going to be double wages, right? And so, Mr. Sheba went to the plantation official, who told him that it's going to work a hardship on them. Mr. Sheba of Hawaii Shimpo.

A: Oh, I see. I don't have his name here anywhere.

T: No.

A: He was the editor of the Hawaii Shimpo?

T: Yes. They were paid off by the plantation company--I mean these two newspapers, the Hawaii Shimpo and the Hawaii Nichi Nichi--to side with them.

A: I wonder how much of that goes on nowadays too.

T: I really don't know.

A: If they did it then, why wouldn't they do it now? And so, didn't these people get their increase?

T: So now the workers went on strike to get that increase. They didn't have any unions then.

A: No. They organized themselves and did this. What year was this, Mr. Kawamoto?

K: 1907 [1909, according to historians]. Yeah. First Japanese strike. Big news, though. Those day no more union like today. One man, Negoro, graduate from University of [California], you know. And then he put my paper, you know, raise to dollar a day. And then, two paper is planter side, you know. That plantation twenty-five big company, you know. [Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association] They buy up to the big money Mr. Sheba--Tsurushima from planter side--then fight to our small paper, fighting four months.

A: These other two papers were paid off by the plantation to side with them and not increase the wage and they [Nippu Jiji] wanted the wage to be increased.

T: They were with the laborers.

A: And Negoro had sent a letter to . . .

T: Nippu Jiji. Negoro is the one that instigated the strike.

A: What was Negoro's first name, do you know?

T: Genshi. [The 1909 City Directory lists Motoyuki Negoro as a clerk employed by Atkinson and Quarles. The 1910 edition lists Genshi Negoro as an interpreter. Dr. Genshi Negoro organized the Japanese (Higher Wage) Association of Hawaii, according to historian Lawrence H. Fuchs.]

K: You know that Mr. [Yasutaro] Soga is [editor of] Nippu Jiji, eh?

T: You know at that time they didn't have any union to back them up, so Nippu Jiji was backing up the laborer--bucking for them. So they were going on strike for four months and at that time . . .

K: All right. And then planter got two paper to fight-fight. You know, that paper all island that time only thirty-five cents circulation one month.

T: The subscription rate was thirty-five cents a month.

K: But business too hard, you know, because everybody want to make money and send to Japan, you know. Other two paper circulation coming Nippu Jiji, my paper, you know?

A: Yes.

K: And you know now that Honolulu Paper Company [was], before, Hawaii News Company [Hawaiian News Company, Ltd.]. And then Hawaii News Company is newspaper store, you know, and then he buy out--Mr. Stanley Tada--for the Honolulu Paper Company. Before that, Mr. [John Harris] Soper is the Hawaii News Company [president].

T: Oh, you know that the strike wasn't a success. After four months' strike, they couldn't get the raise so the laborers all had to go back to work on their former fifty cents. And the leaders of the strike--Mr. Negoro, Mr. Yasutaro Soga, Mr. Fred Makino, and Yokichi Tasaka--they were sent to jail for three years because of their activities. [They were "arrested for conspiracy," according to historian Gavan Daws.]

A: All strike leaders sent to jail. That sounds unjust. Were they tried or anything? Did they have a trial for them?

T: Without trial.

A: Sent to jail without trial.

T: That's how powerful the plantations [through their planters' association] were.

K: No more open court, then put inside. Yes. Bad treatment, you know.

T: Masashi Tokieda--he was then manager of Yokohama Specie Bank--spoke to Reverend [Albert W.] Palmer of Central Union Church. He was the reverend there at that time. Have you heard of him? [His ministry was 1917-1924.]

A: I've heard that name certainly.

T: Spoke to him to intervene for these strike leaders that were sentenced to jail for three years. Said that was too much, you know. It was unjust. So they cut it to three months. After three months they were released. [During another strike for higher wages in 1920, Reverend Palmer "put forward a plan of conciliation" between Japanese

strikers and the planters who had "made a purely racial issue of the dispute."]

(Mr. Kawamoto tells a story in Japanese now) He said, all the readers of the other two newspapers changed to their newspaper because they backed the laborers up, but they couldn't pay for the subscription because they were out of work for four months. So they owed Hawaii News Company lots of money because they got supplies from the company and couldn't pay their bill. They owed $5,000 to the supply company. They were getting a lot of readers but they couldn't pay for the subscription so they owed a lot of money to the supply company. The sugar plantation [association] and the other two newspapers were determined to bankrupt their company, so they got this court order to attach. Since they had a $5,000 debt, their company was attached.

END OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

And all the big Japanese stores that he [Mr. Kawamoto] went around to borrow [money from] were afraid of the plantation company. Naturally their business would be affected by the Big Five company [Hawaii's largest firms], you know, so they said they just can't help him. So he went to--he consulted with these men: Mr. [Kiyozo] Kawasaki of Kawasaki Hotel, Mr. [Miyozuchi] Komeya of Komeya Hotel, Mr. [Matsutaro] Yamashiro of Yamashiro Hotel, and Mr. Ono--Kenkichi Ono--he was the lawyer. These were all hotel men and this Mr. Ono is a lawyer.

He consulted with these four men and they decided to hold a meeting at the Roosevelt Theater [formerly the Asahi Theater; now, in 1979, the Rex Theater] at which time it was decided to issue $20 bonds to cover the $5,000 debt. And he was able to sell enough of these $20 bonds--he collected $5,000--so that the company was saved. And they were able to return the $20 bond with interest within one year. That was the promise. That's how they collected the $5,000.

(at this point I obtain the first names of the four men that are editorially inserted above and there is a recap of what happened at the mass meeting at the Roosevelt Theator)

While Mr. Soga was in jail--he thought he had to be in jail for three years, right? So he sent his wife who was ailing and his second son, who was also ailing, and the oldest son, Shigeo Soga--he was five years old at the time--he sent them to Japan, to Osaka to his family--to her family--since he thought he can not support them for three years. They left for Japan while he was still in

jail so he was allowed to see them off and he went to the wharf in his prison garb, guarded by the prison guard. But his wife and the youngest son, who were both ailing at the time, passed away in Japan. So after he was released from jail, after three months, he went to Japan to get his oldest son and returned here.

All this [the meeting and the paying of debts] happened when he was in jail, so he [Mr. Kawamoto] had to do it on his own. Then after he got released, Mr. Soga had to go to Japan and he had to carry on. In the meantime, the other two papers, since they were working for the plantation company, were very unpopular with the laborers, naturally, so they all became _their_ [_Nippu Jiji_] readers and pretty soon the other two companies folded up, which left only _their_ newspaper company. After two years the other two newspaper companies folded up.

And then Mr. Fred Makino, one of the strike leaders, then founded his own newspaper, which is the _Hawaii Hochi_. So now they have two newspapers. At present there are only two [Japanese] newspapers. This Mr. Fred Makino is half-Caucasian, you know, although he was born in Japan. I think his father was Caucasian but he took his mother's name.

A: Now, when did the _Nippu Jiji_ become the _Hawaii Times_?

T: During the war years [of World War II]. You know, they had to change their name.

A: They had to change it during the war? Why?

T: Because they didn't want anything Japanese at the time, you remember?

A: I'm not sure. You know, I left. I was here after the war started for six months but. . . . You mean they didn't want any names Japanese so they had to change them all?

T: Even _Hawaii Hochi_ was at the time _Hawaii Herald_. They changed it back to Hochi again after the war ended. But _Hawaii Times_ kept the _Hawaii Times_-name. They didn't change it back to _Nippu Jiji_.

A: All right, now, I have to find out more about this because I didn't know about that, or was not aware, I guess. Who mandated that? Who said they had to change?

T: The army controlled the two newspapers at that time. All during the war years the army controlled the two newspapers. They could just publish what the army told them to publish. Under army control. You know, they had that military

government at the time. We didn't have a governor.

A: Yes, I remember that. [Governor Joseph B. Poindexter proclaimed martial law on December 7, 1941.]

T: (after Mr. Kawamoto speaks) What he's saying is that locally owned Japanese paper is only the Hawaii Times because Hawaii Hochi was sold to the Shizuoka Shimbun, so it's actually Japanese capital-owned.

A: I see. So one is a Japan-owned newspaper and the Hawaii Times is the only locally owned Japanese newspaper. All right. Now I don't want to forget this, about these honors and things that Mr. . . .

T: That he got?

A: Yes. I want to find out what that honor was, that medal or the award that he received, and what he received it for exactly and who presented it to him. May I see it? May I see the award? I never saw it. I saw it in the newspaper --a picture. Oh, it's in Japanese because the Japanese government gave you this award in Japan. He went to Japan to receive this award. My, isn't that beautiful, these symbols here.

T: That's a replica of the medal. 1966.

A: 1966 it was issued--I mean, given to him.

T: November 3, 1966.

A: What is this citation or award?

T: This is from--Order of the Fifth Class. For promoting the friendship of the Japanese government and the government of the United States.

A: How did he do this?

T: Through his newspaper work. He said he got a lot of help from Mr. [Lorrin P.] Thurston of [Honolulu] Advertiser and Mr. [Joseph R.] Farrington of [Honolulu] Star-Bulletin. He learned a lot of things from those two companies. Went there and learned and then adapted it to his own company. That's how their newspaper, his company, grew.

He said, when he wanted a bigger printing machine, he bought his machine from the Star-Bulletin and then he sold his old machine to [Hilo] Tribune Herald. And one he sold to Syngman Rhee when he got another one from the Star-Bulletin. And after Tribune Herald outgrew that machine,

they sold it to the Maui newspaper, so the machine's going round and around and cycling.

A: Was Syngman Rhee in the newspaper business here?

T: Yes, he was running a newspaper here for awhile and . . .

A: What was the name of the newspaper?

T: Korean newspaper.

A: I didn't realize that, that Syngman Rhee had a newspaper.

K: Syngman Rhee is a big man, you know. He's labor for three dollar month. He jack up from old Korean paper. And then go mainland high school and married that-place wife, you know, and then come back over here in the second war. President [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt taken up to the Korean president, you know. That time, Japan get up from that Japan-Korean statement in the wartime, you know.

A: Yes. Yeh, I think I know. Would you clarify it to be sure I understand what he's saying?

T: What? What part?

A: Well, he was talking about Japanese and Koreans during wartime being one.

T: Well, the point that he wants to stress is that his newspaper, Hawaii Times, always was a clean and honest paper and never, you know--always paid their debts. They didn't cause any trouble.

K: Last year, me, June 15 come back only month and a half.

T: Oh, he's talking about the time he visited the Expo [1970 Osaka World's Fair]. Through his newspaper work he met a lot of influential people, so whenever he goes to visit Japan, he is treated very well. So when he wanted to go and see the Expo, he didn't have to stand in line or anything, through the newspaper company--the Mainichi Newspaper Company, the big company.

K: This Kyodo Newspaper. Kyodo Building. (he shows us a picture of him with other newspaper men taken in front of the Kyodo Newspaper Building)

A: Kyodo. Yes, I see Kyodo here. Kyodo Newspaper. This is the 1970 Exposition.

K: Seventy-seven country.

T: He was taken all around in a car.

A: Well, they all look very prosperous there in that picture, don't they? Very prosperous.

T: Yeh, they're all executives of newspaper companies.

END OF SIDE 2/2ND TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen, 1979

NOTE:

At the 1968 Centennial of Japanese immigration at Honolulu International Center [now the Neal S. Blaisdell Center in 1979] on June 16, 1968, Katsuichi Kawamoto was presented with another award by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who represented the Japanese government that made the award to him, for "working for the good of the Japanese community."

During his news career, Mr. Kawamoto also sponsored sports events--baseball and swimming--and the Japan inter-series.

He has retired from newspaper work but is active in the Japanese community. He was recently elected president of the Senior Citizens group of five hundred members who meet twice weekly at the Kaimuki Library. The group was presented an American flag at its organizational meeting by Andy Matsunaga, brother of Sparky Matsunaga, Hawaii's Representative to the United States House of Representatives [and now a senator in 1979].

Mr. Kawamoto is also past-president and currently advisor to the United Japanese Society; Yamaguchi Ken Association; and the Iwakuni City Association.

At ninety, he still maintains his own Japanese garden, pruning shrubs and trees with an electric pruner and climbing a ladder to reach high branches.

Interviewer/editor

July 5, 1971

Katsuichi Kawamoto

Information obtained from City Directories and other sources in the Archives of Hawaii:

1899 - Yardboy, Mrs. O.G. Gilhus, off Beretania opposite Rice Mill.

1901 - Servant, residence ss Nuuanu Avenue near Wyllie.

1902 - No listing for Kawamoto.
Kawamoko - laborer, 2442 Nuuanu Avenue.

1903-04 - Painter, Beretania near Smith Street.

1908 - Employee, Nippu Jiji.

1909 - Foreman, Nippu Jiji Company. Residence Cunha Lane off Vineyard.

1920 - Manager, Nippu Jiji Company, Ltd., rear 144 North Kukui Street.

RE: Genshi and Motoyuki Negoro:

1909 - Motoyuki Negoro - clerk Atkinson & Quarles.

1910 - Genshi Negoro, interpreter - Rooms 1244 Fort Street.

1919 - Motoyuki Negoro - 1650 Nuuanu Avenue.

1920 - Motoyuki and Genshi Negoro, interpreters - 1650 Nuuanu Avenue.

According to historian Lawrence H. Fuchs, in Hawaii Pono, "Motoyuki Negoro, who had studied law at the University of California, wrote a treatise on the working conditions of Japanese laborers which was published by Yasutaro Soga in the Japanese paper Nippu Jiji," prior to the 1909 strike. p. 118

"In October 1919 . . . the Japanese Association of Hawaii, organized by Dr. Genshi Negoro, held a mass meeting in Honolulu, attended by Japanese school leaders, newspapermen, and contractors, and also by Pablo Manlapit and two Filipino laborers." p. 214

Although Kawamoto mentions only Genshi Negoro, who appears to have been associated more with the 1920 strike, Motoyuki Negoro was evidently instrumental in the 1909 strike, which he refers to.

Subject Index

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.